

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-75 were originally presented for consideration in this application. Claims 6, 8, 40, 46, 51 and 52 have been canceled. Accordingly, claims 1-5, 7, 9-39, 41-45, 47-50 and 53-75 are currently pending in this application.

The examiner's indications that claims 15-30 are allowed, and that claims 2-4, 7-10, 34, 37, 38, 40-43, 47, 48, 52-55, 62, 64, 67, 68 and 70-73 contain allowable subject matter, are noted with appreciation.

Claims 2, 4, 5, 7, 34, 37, 47 and 53 have been placed in allowable form by rewriting them in independent form above. Thus, the examiner is respectfully requested to allow these claims, as well as the claims dependent therefrom.

Independent claim 1 has been placed in allowable form above by incorporating therein the limitations of claim 8, which was indicated by the examiner in the Office Action as containing allowable subject matter. Thus, the examiner is respectfully requested to allow claim 1, as well as the claims dependent therefrom. Previously withdrawn claims 11-13 are dependent from claim 1, and the examiner is also requested to consider these claims in the present application, due to the allowability of claim 1.

Independent claim 31 has been placed in allowable form above by incorporating therein the limitations of claim 40, which was indicated by the examiner in the Office Action as containing allowable subject matter. Thus, the examiner is respectfully

requested to allow claim 31, as well as the claims dependent therefrom. Previously withdrawn claim 39 is dependent from claim 31, and the examiner is also requested to consider this claim in the present application, due to the allowability of claim 31.

Independent claim 45 has been placed in allowable form above by incorporating therein the limitations of claim 52, which was indicated by the examiner in the Office Action as containing allowable subject matter. Thus, the examiner is respectfully requested to allow claim 45, as well as the claims dependent therefrom. Previously withdrawn claims 56-58 are dependent from claim 45, and the examiner is also requested to consider these claims in the present application, due to the allowability of claim 45.

Regarding the anticipation rejections of claims 5 and 50, please note that these claims have been rewritten in independent form above. These claims recite that the sleeve is welded to the axle in at least one opening formed laterally through the sleeve. The examiner states that this limitation is disclosed in the Smith reference at column 18, lines 42-46, which reads as follows:

The U-shaped plates 362 and 366 are welded together in compression around the axle 90 in the manner described above with respect to FIG. 30 before welding the plates 362 and 366 to the axle 90. (emphasis added)

It is true that this passage describes welding the plates to the axle. However, the passage clearly does not describe the limitations recited in claims 5 and 50, wherein the sleeve is welded to the axle in at least one opening formed laterally through the sleeve. The Smith reference does not appear to contain any description of how the plates 362, 366 are welded to the axle. Therefore, the examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejections of claims 5 and 50.

Regarding the anticipation rejection of independent claim 60, this rejection is respectfully traversed. Claim 60 recites a particular order of steps, which is not described in the Smith reference. Specifically, claim 60 recites that a sleeve is clamped to an axle, then the sleeve is welded to the axle, and then side walls of an arm are welded to the sleeve.

In rejecting claim 60, the examiner again refers to the passage in the Smith reference quoted above. It is true that this passage describes welding the plates to sides of an arm, welding the plates to each other, and then welding the plates to the axle. However, the specific order of steps recited in claim 60 is not described. In fact, welding of the plates to the sides of the arm is discussed prior to welding the plates to each other and to the axle.

The quoted passage refers to, "the manner described above with respect to FIG. 30," for welding the plates 362, 366 to each other. In the description of the FIG. 30 embodiment, welding of the plates to the axle is specifically discouraged (see col. 15, lines 26-36). Thus, the description of the FIG. 30 embodiment does not cure the deficiency in the quoted passage.

Therefore, the Smith reference does not describe the particular order of steps recited in claim 60, and the examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejections of claim 60 and of the claims dependent therefrom.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, all of the claims pending in this application are now seen to be in a condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance of claims 1-5, 7, 9-39, 41-45, 47-50 and 53-75 is therefore earnestly solicited.

The examiner is hereby requested to telephone the undersigned attorney of record at (972) 516-0030 if such would expedite the prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

KONNEKER & SMITH, P.C.



Marlin R. Smith
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 38,310

Dated: Oct. 27, 2004

660 North Central Expressway
Suite 230
Plano, Texas 75074
(972) 516-0030

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being
deposited with the United States Postal Service as
first class mail in an envelope addressed to:
Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450,
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450,

on OCTOBER 28, 2004
Sherna Stufko